

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 5973

To direct the Attorney General, in consultation with the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, to establish a pilot program to help State prisons and local jails improve the documentation of incarcerated veterans.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 26, 2020

Ms. KENDRA S. HORN of Oklahoma (for herself, Mr. CRENSHAW, Mr. COLE, Ms. SHERRILL, Mr. CROW, Mr. CASE, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Mrs. MURPHY of Florida, Ms. NORTON, and Mrs. RODGERS of Washington) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

A BILL

To direct the Attorney General, in consultation with the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, to establish a pilot program to help State prisons and local jails improve the documentation of incarcerated veterans.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. FINDINGS.**

4 Congress finds the following:

5 (1) Approximately 200,000 veterans are incar-
6 cerated in the United States.

1 (2) More than half of all veterans involved in
2 the criminal justice system suffer from a mental
3 health condition or substance abuse disorder.

4 (3) Such veterans may be at a greater risk for
5 suicide.

6 (4) Veterans released from incarceration have
7 specialized needs and face different issues relating to
8 reentry into society.

9 **SEC. 2. PILOT PROGRAM TO IMPROVE DOCUMENTATION OF**
10 **INCARCERATED VETERANS.**

11 (a) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—The Attorney General, in
12 consultation with the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, shall
13 carry out a pilot program to provide grants and technical
14 assistance to State prisons and local jails to improve docu-
15 mentation of whether inmates of such institutions are vet-
16 erans.

17 (b) **PURPOSE.**—The purposes of the pilot program
18 are the following:

19 (1) To assist the Secretary in providing benefits
20 to incarcerated veterans under laws administered by
21 the Secretary.

22 (2) To assist veterans affairs offices of States
23 in providing benefits to incarcerated veterans under
24 laws administered by such offices.

1 (3) To increase the number of veterans involved
2 in the criminal justice system whose cases are di-
3 verted to veterans treatment courts.

4 (c) PRIORITY.—In selecting grant recipients under
5 the pilot program, the Attorney General shall give priority
6 to State prisons and local jails located in—

7 (1) States that contain the greatest populations
8 of veterans per capita;

9 (2) States with the highest rates of veterans liv-
10 ing in poverty; and

11 (3) jurisdictions that contain a veterans treat-
12 ment court or veterans diversion program.

13 (d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section, the terms “vet-
14 erans treatment court” and “veterans diversion program”
15 mean a State or local court that is participating in the
16 veterans treatment court program (as defined in section
17 2991(i)(1) of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets
18 Act of 1968; 34 U.S.C. 10651(i)(1)).

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